

# Talk 13 – Why and How Should I Tell Others?

Duration 30 Minutes  
HTB Transcripts



## Key:

**P – Personal story** that Nicky Gumbel tells in his Alpha talk. These may be replaced with a live speaker's personal story or the speaker may tell the story about Nicky in the same way Nicky tells stories about others.

**S/S\* – Story** that Nicky tells about someone else (about a friend or a story he heard or read about). Stories marked in the margin with a \* symbol are key stories and should not be omitted from the talk.

**Q/Q\* – Quotes** are key to the talk to emphasize a point and to enable guests to engage and relate the material. We acknowledge that some of the people quoted may not be well known in your local context, however, please be mindful of the value of what is said in the quoted material; not just the guests' knowledge of the person being quoted. If you choose to replace a quote, it should be replaced with something equally effective to maintain the balance of teaching, story, and references to other information sources. In general, we encourage you not to omit or replace quotes unless absolutely necessary. Quotes marked in the margin with a \* symbol are key quotes and should not be omitted from the talk.

**Key Bible Passages** are identified and you may wish to display these visually for your guests.

**Red type** identifies a part of the key teaching text that could be removed or altered for contextualisation.

Text left untouched is the standard key message content of the Alpha talk.

## Talk summary:

- This session explores why Christians tell others about their faith and looks at practical and effective ways of doing so
- Why? Jesus tells us to 'Go' and tell others. We tell others because it's such good news
- How?
  - Presence (You are 'salt' and 'light', Matthew 5:13–16)
  - Persuasion ('Be prepared to give an answer... with gentleness and respect', 1 Peter 3:15)
  - Proclamation ('Come and See!')
  - Power (The transforming power of the Holy Spirit)
  - Prayer (The gospel is the power of God; it has an effect. Pray for others as others have prayed for you)

**NOTE:** Parts of the talk may need to be contextualized for other contexts or cultures but make sure you maintain the key elements of humour and personal testimony. Notice how quotes, and stories are used throughout to add emphasis to the main points of the talk (theology and testimony).

KEY: **Personal Story** **Story** **Quotes** **Key Bible Passages**

**OPTIONAL VOX POPS (English Language only):** If you wish to play vox pops (street interviews related to the subject) as a way of introducing the theme of the talk.

For this talk the questions asked were: What good news have you heard recently? How to you share good news with others? Why would you tell others?

They can be accessed via the following link: [Talk 13 Vox Pops](#)

	Have you told anybody that you are doing the Alpha course? And if you have, what was their reaction?
<b>P</b> <i>Either replace with your own example or omit.</i>	I was playing squash with a guy from a small group that we had some time ago, and as we were playing I asked him this question. I said, 'Have you told any of your friends that you're doing Alpha?' He said, 'No, I haven't told anybody.' So I said, 'Well, what have you told your friends you're doing on Wednesday?' He said, 'I've told them I'm learning French.'
	<p>Well, I don't know where you stand. Maybe you say, 'Well, I'm not ready to tell anybody. I don't even know where I stand, I don't know what I think of it.' But maybe you say, 'Well, I'm beginning to experience something that's different. I'm beginning to experience something of an encounter with Jesus.' Maybe on the Weekend you experienced something.</p> <p>Well, supposing you have some experience of Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and somebody asks you about it, what would you say? How would you explain it? Why would you want to?</p>
<b>P</b> <i>Either amend to reflect your personal experience or omit.</i>	I was an atheist, and I never really understood why Christians felt it necessary to talk about their faith. I was an atheist, but I didn't try and convert people to atheism! So why do Christians talk about their faith? I thought the best kind of Christian would be the one who never talked about their faith – they just lived it out but never told anybody even that they were a Christian.

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Personalise or omit the text  
in red.

And sometimes people say, 'Well, isn't that the best kind of Christians, the ones that just live it out?' And often they talk about a member of their family who is this amazing Christian who never talks about their faith. I call it the 'Uncle Norman' factor. Everyone has an Uncle Norman who's this amazing Christian. But the question I want to ask is: how did Uncle Norman become a Christian? How did he find out? Someone must have told him.

So why should we tell others? Well, first of all, Jesus told us to. The word 'Go' appears in the Bible 1,514 times. Jesus was always saying to people, 'Go! Go and tell! Go and invite! This is such wonderful news! I've come that you might have life and have it abundantly! Go and tell people about it. Go and make disciples.'

Second reason is because of the needs of other people out there. There's such a hunger. Like if you were in a desert and you came across an oasis, you would want to tell people about it. And Jesus satisfies that inner hunger for meaning, for purpose. He died for us to set us free! This is amazing news that we can bring to other people who are often in such desperate need. A recognition of that need sometimes comes from surprising sources.

Q

I read something that the singer Sinéad O'Connor said. She said this: 'As a race we feel empty because our spirituality's been wiped out and we don't know how to express ourselves. And as a result we're encouraged to fill that gap with alcohol, drugs, sex or money. People out there are screaming for the truth.'

So we do it out of love for other people. And we do it because it's such good news. That's what the word 'gospel' means: it means 'good news'! The message of Jesus is the most wonderful news. And good news travels fast.

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P

*Replace with your own story to illustrate how good news travels fast.*

When our first child was born, it was quite a long time ago now, and in the hospital – well, we didn't have mobile phones – in the hospital there was just this phone where you had to shove in like 10p coins. And Pippa my wife had given me a little bag of 10p coins and a list of the people I was to go and ring the moment that he was born.

So I went to the phone. The first person on the list was Pippa's mother, so I rang her and said, 'It's great news: we've had a son. He's twelve pounds' whatever he was, 'a big boy' – still is a big boy! And so I told her. And then I went to ring *my* mother, Number 2 on the list. I couldn't get through to my mother – the line was busy. So I went to Number 3, Pippa's sister. I rang her. I said, 'It's great news!' She said, 'No, no, no, I've heard.' I said, 'How have you heard?' She said, 'My mother rang me.' Then I went to the next one. They said, 'Oh, congratulations!' I said, 'How did you hear?' And I went down the list. Literally every single one had heard. I couldn't tell any of them!

Eventually I got through to my mother, and it turned out she'd been on the phone to Pippa's mother, who'd rung her first straight away. I didn't have to say to Pippa's mother, 'You really must tell people! This is a really important message. You have a solemn duty to proclaim the message!' She was excited. Good news travels fast.

P

*Amend text in red to reflect your personal experience and replace the story with your own to illustrate 'insensitivity'.*

And when I encountered Jesus, I was so excited I just wanted to tell people. I wanted to tell everybody immediately. I just wasn't very sensitive in the way that I went about it.

When I'd been a Christian for ten days, I went to a party and I was determined to tell the first person that I saw at this party about Jesus.

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It so happened that the first person that I saw at the party was the person who is now my wife, Pippa. She wasn't then my wife or even my girlfriend. I saw her there on the dancefloor. And I knew she wasn't a Christian. And I thought, 'Right, I must go and tell her about Jesus!' In the ten days since I'd been a Christian, I'd been to this talk – a similar kind of talk to this – on how do you tell other people. And at this talk they said, 'Well, what you need to do is you need to establish the fact that the person needs Jesus.' So I thought, 'Right, I've got to establish the fact she needs Jesus.'

So I went up to her on the dancefloor and I said, 'Hello, Pippa. You look terrible! You really need Jesus!' Well, as you can imagine, that put her off for a very long time! And when she did finally become a Christian, it was through somebody totally different. That was insensitivity.

P

*Amend text in red to reflect your personal experience and replace the story with your own to illustrate 'fear'.*

Now, if you go around like that as I did, sooner or later you get hurt. And I swung from insensitivity to fear. Ironically, the time that I was most fearful was when I was at theological college. While we were there – we were at theological college in Oxford – we went on a mission to a place called Allerton, just near Liverpool.

And the way it worked was like my friend Rupert and I were to go and speak in someone's house. But before we did that, we'd have supper with people vaguely connected with the parish, and in this case it was a woman involved in the community group. Her husband wasn't a Christian. He was a very smart solicitor. He was the Chancellor of the Diocese. They lived in a smart house, they had smart children, and we were having a smart meal together.

And over this meal, he leant over the table and he addressed the question to me – I wished he'd addressed it to Rupert, because Rupert is bold as a lion! – but he addressed it to me. He said,

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	<p>‘Well, what are you doing up here anyway?’ So I said, ‘Well, we’ve come up here... er, by train! And we’re here, umm, we’re here... we’re here together because... because we’re such good friends. And we’re here to umm... umm... we’re here to... to...’ And my friend Rupert could bear the agony of this no longer. He said, ‘We’re here to tell people about Jesus!’ And I thought, ‘Oh no, so embarrassing!’ I thought, ‘Why am I ashamed even to mention the name Jesus?’</p> <p>Much of my life has been like that. I’ve swung from insensitivity to fear. And then I’ve heard a talk like this and I thought, ‘Oh, I must go and tell people,’ and I’ve gone back to insensitivity! And then I get hurt and I go back to fear.</p>
<p>Personalise the text in red.</p> <p>Delete text in red if this doesn’t apply to your context, eg for translations.</p>	<p>And all the way along I’ve been looking for a way in which people like me – I’m quite shy and introverted – who don’t find it easy to communicate our faith can do it in a way that does not involve insensitivity or fear.</p> <p>And I think the essential you could sum up in one word: it’s love. And there are various things, ways, we can do this – many, many different ways. But I’ve picked on five <b>that all begin with the letter P</b>, to make it easier to remember.</p>
	<h2>Talk Point 1</h2> <h3>PRESENCE</h3>
<p>Delete text in red if this doesn’t apply to your context, eg for translations.</p>	<p>And the first one is <i>Presence</i> – <b>not like presents as in Christmas presents</b>, but in presence: being there, being out there in the world. This is what Jesus said, Matthew 5:13. Jesus said this:</p>
<p><b>Matthew 5: 13–16</b></p>	<p><b>‘You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world... let your light shine before others, that they may see your good</b></p>

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	deeds and praise your Father in heaven.'
	Jesus says: 'If you want to make a difference, you've got to be out there. You're like salt.' Salt, of course, flavours, but in the ancient world it was a preservative – it stopped meat from going bad. He said, 'You're the people who are going to stop the society around going bad. You're going to have a wide-ranging influence. <b>You are the salt of the earth</b> – the whole world! <b>You're the light</b> that will bring light in the darkness.'
Q	Martin Luther King said this: 'Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.'
	<p>And Jesus says you've got to be out there in the workplace, amongst your friends, in your community, acting like salt and light.</p> <p>And we do that just by the life that you lead, by the love that you have for people, by little acts of kindness, by your integrity, by your authenticity, honesty – just by the kind of people that you are. Gracious. Trustworthy.</p> <p>And then he says: 'By your good deeds, <b>that people may see your good deeds</b>': how you respond to hunger, homelessness, poverty; what we do about the injustices of the world, the gross inequalities, the inhumanity.</p>
S*	Think of William Wilberforce. William Wilberforce was twenty-seven years of age and he looked around at his world then in the eighteenth century and he saw this terrible evil of slavery. We all know now that slavery is evil, but at the time they didn't think of it like that. They thought of it as a great boon for the economy. And very few people thought it was a good thing to abolish slavery. But he saw how inhuman it was, how degrading it was, what an

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	<p>abomination it was, and he was determined, aged twenty-seven, to give his life to seeing this terrible evil removed from our society.</p> <p>And in order to do that, he got himself elected as an MP; he put down numerous Bills in Parliament. They were all defeated – it was such an unpopular course. But he was so passionate that he kept going, driven by his faith in Jesus Christ. And he believed, to put it in his own words, ‘that the Almighty would give him success’. And he did. But it took him forty-five years. It wasn’t until 1833 that the Abolition of Slavery Act was passed in Parliament. Three days later he died, and was buried in Westminster Abbey in national recognition of those forty-five years of persevering struggle on behalf of African slaves.</p>
<p>Personalise the text in red.</p>	<p>But what about today? Today we have massive needs out there. Look at the poverty out there: at least a billion people in the world living on less than a dollar a day, going to bed hungry every night. Do you know, if you and I were to live on bread and water for the rest of our lives, we would be better off than them? Every four seconds poverty takes a child’s life.</p> <p>Last year 1.5 million people died of AIDS-related diseases. And actually slavery has come back: modern-day slavery is far greater than it was in the eighteenth century. Far more people in slavery today than there ever have been. Every thirty seconds another person is taken victim of human trafficking. <b>And when you talk about these vast numbers, I think I used to feel, ‘Oh, you know, what can I do? It’s just so massive. Is it really possible for an individual to make any difference?’</b></p>
<p><b>S*</b></p> <p>Either tell this story as scripted, or show the</p>	<p>A man was walking along a beach in Mexico, and he saw on the beach tens of thousands of starfish. The tide had receded and they’d left these starfish drying out in the heat of the sun, lacking</p>

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<p>animation via the following hyperlink:  <a href="#">Starfish story</a></p>	<p>oxygen, and they were all dying. And then he noticed this little boy who was picking the starfish up one by one, he was walking down to the water's edge and throwing them into the sea. And he said to this little boy, 'Look, just look at this beach: there are tens of thousands of starfish. You really don't think you're going to make any difference?' And the little boy just went back and he picked up another one and he threw it in the sea, and as he did so he said: 'I bet it made a difference for <i>that</i> one!'</p>
<p>The line in red ties in to the starfish story above.</p>	<p><b>And that's all we can do:</b> we can make a difference for one person at a time.</p>
<p>Q</p>	<p>Nelson Mandela said this: 'It's not the kings and generals who make history, but the masses of the people.'</p>
	<h2>Talk Point 2</h2> <h3>PERSUASION</h3>
<p>Delete text in red if this doesn't apply to your context, eg for translations.</p>	<p>That's the first <b>P</b>: <i>Presence</i>. The second <b>P</b> is <i>Persuasion</i>. Not pressure. Pressure is very off-putting. <b>I run a mile – if anyone puts any pressure on me, I'm out of it!</b> But persuasion is what the early Christians used. Paul said, 'We try and persuade people, because this is so wonderful, it's such good news, we want everyone to know about Jesus, and we try and persuade people of the truth of the life and death and resurrection of Jesus.'</p> <p>And he did it by reasoning and explaining. Because it's not a blind leap of faith; it's possible to persuade people by showing them good reasons to believe.</p>
<p><b>1 Peter 3:15</b></p>	<p>The apostle Peter says this: <b>'Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason' – it's not irrational – 'to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with</b></p>

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## gentleness and respect.'

Gentleness is the opposite of arrogance. Respect because every human being is created in the image of God. And one of the ways we show respect for people is by listening to them. You may have been surprised, when you first came on Alpha, in the small group, why the hosts kept asking this question: 'What do *you* think? What do *you* feel? What do other people in the group think?' And you thought, 'Well, why doesn't *he* say something' or '*she* say something?'

And the reason is because most people aren't ready to listen until they've first been heard. And it's so important to listen. And it's so fascinating to listen. *I love the small group, because people are so fascinating, so interesting. And we genuinely want to know what you think.* And it's the mark of respect to listen.

But he also says, '**be ready to give an answer to everyone who asks you**'. Sometimes you might have to say, 'I don't know. I really don't know the answer to that. Why does God allow suffering? I don't know!' What about some other question they ask: you say, 'I don't know!' But what you could also say is, 'I don't know the answer to that, but I'll go away and I'll look it up and I'll come back to you.'

*Searching Issues* by Nicky Gumbel addresses some of the questions and complex issues that people often ask about in the small group. These are not the answers, but just an attempt – some of the kind of things that you might say if somebody says, 'Well, why does God allow suffering?'

*Or what about other religions? Is there a conflict between science and Christianity? Doesn't religion do more harm than good? You*

*Personalise the text in red in order to be able to say it with authenticity and conviction.*

*If possible, hold up a copy of Searching Issues and have copies of available for guests to buy if they wish.*

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	<p>don't have to read this book, but read something so that, if somebody asks you that question, you can say: 'Well, have you thought about <i>this</i>?'</p>
<p>Personalise the text in red in order to be able to say it with authenticity and conviction.</p>	<p>I'm so grateful to the people who bothered with me, because I had so many objections to faith. But they bothered to persuade me, to give me answers to my questions.</p> <p>You know, when the <i>Titanic</i> sank, before it sank, people were aware that it was going to sink, and they went round trying to persuade people to get into the lifeboats. But a lot of people wouldn't get in, and most of the early lifeboats left half-empty, because people didn't believe it. But why were they trying to persuade them? It was out of love. And we persuade people about Jesus out of love.</p>
	<h2>Talk Point 3</h2> <h3>PROCLAMATION</h3>
<p>Delete text in red if this doesn't apply to your context, eg for translations.</p>	<p>Third <b>P</b> is <i>Proclamation</i>: communicating the message of Jesus. That's what we're trying to do on Alpha. There's an almost infinite variety of ways in which you can communicate the message of Jesus to other people, but here are some of the ways in the New Testament:</p> <p>First of all, people say: '<b>Come and see!</b>' That's what Jesus did: he said to people, 'If you're interested, <b>come and see!</b>' And then when people followed him, they went and said to <i>their</i> friends, '<b>Come and see!</b>' I guess that's why many of you are here today: some friend, some member of your family, some work colleague, said, 'Come and see!'</p> <p>And actually there is no greater privilege than introducing</p>

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	<p>someone to Jesus. In the beginning of John's Gospel we read about one of those disciples who was invited – <b>'Come and see'</b>: Andrew.</p>
John 1:41–42	<p><b>The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon (Peter) and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus.'</b></p>
Q	<p>As one former Archbishop of Canterbury, William Temple, said: 'That's the greatest service one person can render another: to bring them to Jesus.'</p>
	<p>And Andrew was always bringing people to Jesus. We don't know that much about Andrew except that he was always bringing to Jesus. One of the people he brought was his brother Peter. Peter was probably one of the greatest influences on the world in the history of humankind. You just have to go to Rome, to St Peter's, and see the influence that he has had in human history. Not all of us can do what Peter did, but we can all do what Andrew did: bring people to Jesus.</p>
S	<p>I heard about a man called Albert McMakin. He was 24 years of age, he was a farmer, he'd just become a Christian and he was really excited. He heard that there was this event going on where someone was speaking about Jesus, and he decided he would invite all his friends.</p> <p>So he'd got this old van, and there was one guy he really wanted to invite to this event. This guy was a farmer's son, and he really wasn't interested. He had lots of girlfriends, he was a very good-looking guy. And Albert McMakin thought, 'How am I going to get him?' So eventually he said to him, 'Look, would you drive the van?' And the guy said, 'Okay, well, I'll drive the van. I don't want to come in, but I'll drive the van.'</p>

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And he came along and drove the van, and was interested to see what was going on, so he popped in at the back, and he was spellbound. And he went back night after night after night. And on the last night the speaker said, 'If you want to give your life to Jesus, come to the front.' And this farmer's son got up and went to the front.

Since that day, that person has spoken to 210 million people in person about the Christian faith. He's been the friend and confidant of nine American Presidents. And he's spoken – not live, but through television and so on – to half the world's population. His name, of course, is Billy Graham. The year was 1934.

We can't all be Billy Grahams, but we can all be Albert McMakins! We can all be the one who says, 'Come and see' and bring our friends to Christ.

And then we can tell our own story. That's what the apostle Paul did over and over again. He said: 'Look, this is how I was. Then I met Jesus, and this is how I am now.' And there is no answer to your story. When you tell a friend what happened to you, they can't say, 'No, it didn't.' It's like the blind man who Jesus healed. The Pharisees came and attacked him and there were all these questions. He said, 'Look, I'm so sorry, I can't answer all your questions. But I can tell you one thing: **once I was blind; now I can see.**'

And then sometimes we get an opportunity to explain ourselves.

**S**

*Either use this story or  
replace with a similar story.*

A man called John Goulding told me this, a businessman. He'd had problems in his marriage, he had problems with his business, he had problems with his health. He was going through a really tough time. He was on a business trip to the United States. He was in a taxi, and as he was in the taxi he noticed on the dashboard the

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picture of the taxi-driver's children. And he started chatting. He couldn't see the taxi-driver's face, but he started chatting to the taxi-driver, and the taxi-driver said this:

'I sense you're not happy. If you believe in Christ, it makes all the difference!' And he said he was so surprised. He'd thought *he* was the one in authority because he was paying for the taxi, yet this guy seemed to have enormous authority. He said, 'Don't you think it's time you settled all these problems by accepting Christ?' They arrived at the airport, and at that moment the taxi-driver turned round and he said that for the first time he saw his face, and he saw the love in his face.

And he said, 'Why don't we pray? If you want Christ in your life, ask him in.' So there with the taxi-driver, at the airport, John Goulding invited Christ into his life. And the taxi-driver said, 'Now, here's a little booklet that you might find very helpful.' I'm not sure it was *Why Jesus?* But he went off and he read the booklet, and he gave his life to Christ. And that moment changed his life.

## Talk Point 4

POWER

1 Thessalonians 1:5

**'Our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction.'**

That's what I have loved about being involved in Alpha over the years, is seeing that this is not just about words, not just about intellectual arguments; it's about the experience of the Holy Spirit. That's why the Weekend is so important: because we experience God's love being poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. And that is transforming. We'll look more at this aspect of the power of the Spirit when we come to look at the subject of healing.

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# Talk Point 5

## PRAYER

Fifth **P** is *Prayer*: prayer for others. The apostle Paul said:

Romans 10:1

**‘My heart’s desire and prayer to God is that they may be saved.’**

**S**

*Either use this story or replace with a similar story about someone coming to faith as a result of someone praying for them.*

I think of a guy called Rick. When he became a Christian he was so excited, but he didn’t really have any Christian friends. But he did have one friend, and he rang him to tell him. And this friend said, ‘Oh Rick, that’s amazing news. Do you know, I have been praying for you every single day for four years!’ And Rick thought, ‘Wow, that really works! I’d better start praying for *my* friends.’ So he started praying for his friend Tim. Ten weeks later Tim became a Christian.

I want to encourage you not to give up. The message we have is so important!

**S\***

I heard about a man who was shot in World War II, and he was dying in the trenches. And his friend came over and said, ‘Is there anything I can do for you?’ And the guy said, ‘No, I’m dying. There’s nothing you can do for me.’ He said, ‘Well, is there any message you want me to take when I go home?’ And he said, ‘Yes. Go to this man at this address and tell him that what he taught me as a child is helping me to die now.’

So when the guy got back to England – his friend got back to England – he went to see that man. It turned out to be his Sunday School teacher. And he went to the Sunday School teacher and told him what had happened: that what he’d taught him as a child helped him to die in the last minutes of his life. And the Sunday School teacher said, ‘God forgive me. I gave up teaching Sunday

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	School years ago, because I thought that what I was doing was having no effect.'
	But whenever you pass on the good news of Jesus, it has an effect. The gospel is the power of God.
<p><b>S</b></p> <p><i>Either adapt and use this story or replace with a similar story.</i></p>	<p>A friend of ours, called Jane, brought someone to Alpha, and I said to her, 'Wow, it's amazing to see the effect that it's had on the life of your friend who came!' And she said, 'Yeah, it's amazing.' She said, 'If bringing her to Alpha was the only thing I'd done in my life, my life would have been worthwhile.'</p>

The Alpha Transcripts are taken from *Alpha with Nicky Gumbel* filmed 2014–2015, which are based on *Questions of Life* by Nicky Gumbel.

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**Acknowledgements:**

Scripture quotations taken from the Holy Bible,

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